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New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 52 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1)

Mr. Nikolov (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I am making this statement on behalf of my Permanent Representative, who is unable to present at this morning's meeting.

In the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations provided the world with a vision for the new century. That vision was linked to measurable targets that included precise and time-bound goals. In addition, the Secretary-General produced a road map (A/56/326) of the steps needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Together with the definition of new development goals, the reform of peace operations, the enhancing of coherence and the building of new partnerships, the road map is among the new features of the United Nations, an Organization willing and able to deal with the requirements and the challenges of the new millennium.

However, strengthening the United Nations cannot be completely achieved without two basic preconditions: creating an agenda focused on the essential issues of the globe and reforming the main United Nations bodies. We have succeeded in creating an appropriate agenda. The programme of work of the Organization, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/57/387), including strengthening human rights and enhancing public information, deserves our full support.

The United Nations has also made remarkable achievements in strengthening its capacity to fight terrorism and in two crucial areas — financing for development and sustainable development. On the other hand, if our agenda has an Achilles heel, then it must be identified, along with the shortcomings of and delays in reforming the main United Nations bodies.

By placing this issue as a very high priority on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, Mr. President, you have not only met our expectations, but have also provided an opportunity to regain momentum in reforming both the General Assembly and the Security Council. In order for this process to be successful, full compliance by Member States is necessary, as is the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council and the work of the facilitators for the open-ended consultations on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

It is imperative to recognize during deliberations on strengthening the United Nations that this issue transcends the national interests of each individual Member State. If we want the United Nations to be a more meaningful, powerful and effective organization in the era of globalization, it must not be reduced to a

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mere sum of national interests. That should be taken as the point of departure of our intention to reform the United Nations system. We should be guided by the fact that a complete reform of the United Nations cannot be accomplished without the simultaneous enlargement of the Security Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and strengthening of the management and administration of the United Nations.

Regarding the overall goal, we should seek full emancipation of the United Nations as a multilateral institution, with a General Assembly that is not only revitalized, but also capable of utilizing its full capacity; with a Security Council that is truly representative of the United Nations membership; and with a streamlined Secretariat that is responsive to the needs and interests of all Member States.

In short, what Raymond Aaron has defined as the germ of a universal consciousness should become the main ingredient in deepening the reform process of the United Nations.

According to the Charter, the organizational architecture of the United Nations is based on three pillars — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat — whose equal importance must be emphasized. Contrary to that, however, the General Assembly is increasingly viewed as the weakest pillar of the three. Its main problem seems to stem from what might be defined as inertia that cannot be ended, despite the fact that, since the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, many resolutions on revitalization have been adopted.

The signal is more than clear. In order to revitalize the General Assembly, we must find ways and means of reshaping and restructuring its agenda, working methods and procedural matters. The General Assembly must not exercise its function as a seasonal body. The General Assembly, together with its working bodies, such as the presidency, the Bureau and others, has to play an active role in designing, disseminating and implementing United Nations policies on the global issues which should be at the core of its activities. The recent measures aimed at improving some of the Assembly's working methods should be considered as a first step in the right direction.

In the Millennium Declaration Member States have already made a strong commitment to reform the United Nations system, reaffirming the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. One can hardly imagine how that role can be safeguarded without far-reaching reform of the General Assembly.

Undoubtedly, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is a key issue of the ongoing reform debate. Close cooperation and coordination between the two bodies appears necessary, particularly in discussing issues of vital importance to the Organization as a whole. If we agree with the assessment made by our colleague Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore, that an essential symbiotic relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly exists, then we must accept the need to restructure the General Assembly, rather than revitalizing it. That is the only way to preserve the balance between a reformed Security Council and the General Assembly.

During the recent debate on the report of the Security Council, several delegations made a clear commitment to ensuring that reform is comprehensive, and that it includes expansion of Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and improvement of the Council's working methods and decision-making process, and that it imparts balance, accurate representation and legitimacy to the Council, thus reflecting contemporary reality.

At the same time, we agree with warnings against makeshift solutions, such as the one made by Ambassador Schumacher of Germany. In our opinion, the most effective way to avoid them is through a phased reform process. We should not forget that we are ultimately responsible for the pace and scope of the reform process.

It is for Member States to decide the dosage of political will required to reach a successful outcome in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform. On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that the authority of the Organization as a whole, and the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council are at stake. To promote global governance, as one of our colleagues, Ambassador Vento of Italy, rightly pointed out in the aforementioned debate, the Security Council needs true leadership based on a collective vision and shared interests and values.

Many people, among them the people of the Republic of Macedonia, share a vision of a world that must move from interdependence to being an integrated global community with a shared future, shared responsibilities, shared prosperity and, above all, shared values. Can we imagine such a paradigm of progress without an organization like the United Nations? I cannot. But nor can it be imagined that the United Nations can serve those purposes without profound reform of its main bodies fully corresponding to such a vision.

Quite often, during our discussions on strengthening the United Nations, reference is made to the utmost necessity for the Organization to be both effective and efficient. Within that context, allow me to quote a former colleague, Ambassador Perkins: "Being effective means doing the right thing. Being efficient means doing the thing right". Let those words of wisdom guide us while we carry forward the noble endeavour of the work of the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): I would like to voice my country's appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts in the further expansion of the scope of reforms and modernization of the United Nations. The reform measures presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2002/387) are a necessary and valuable contribution to the implementation of the noble objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

The reform and adaptation of the United Nations to meet present requirements and needs can and should be pursued at different levels. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Wladzimierz Cimoszewicz, during the general debate at this very session called for the elaboration of a document that could be considered as a new act of the United Nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century, which could give fresh impetus to the principles, organs and mechanisms of the United Nations and make them more responsive to the challenges dominating the life of the international community today (*see A/57/PV.8, p. 20*).

Four groups of fundamental problems have been identified, and an appropriate mechanism, initially in the form of a group of eminent persons, has been suggested. We want to consult on these ideas with the United Nations membership at large. We duly note that the reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General focus on a cluster of managerial and efficiency measures, within his own area of responsibility and competence, aimed at ensuring better service for Member States. Consequently, the key political domain of United Nations reform falls within the purview of Member States and, as such, requires their concerted efforts.

Mr. President, let me express our thanks for your timely initiative of convening the informal consultations held on 24 October which, before the present debate, allowed for an exchange of views and a dialogue on the reform proposals between Member States and the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette.

Poland is following this debate with the utmost interest and shares a great number of the opinions expressed during its course. In particular, we align ourselves with the statement of Ambassador Løj of Denmark, who spoke on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

At this stage of the debate, I would like to share with other Member States some general observations and a few comments on issues presented in the document A/57/387 that are perceived by my Government to be the important ones. We begin with the Secretary-General's oft-repeated premise that United Nations reform is not an event but a process. We hope that this new initiative will add momentum to United Nations reform, building on the achievements and lessons learned so far, and that it will focus on well-defined objectives and achievable and measurable expected accomplishments.

To attain this, it is necessary to promote and strengthen mutual trust, cooperation and consultations between Member States and the Secretariat. This is a *conditio sine qua non* since reform and its success are a responsibility shared by both Member States and the Secretariat.

In the view of my delegation, the strength of the report on reform lies in its focus on a select group of issues and in its avoidance of the natural temptation to cover everything, spreading the reform exercise over too many issues at one time. The reform document sets out the goals and objectives to be achieved. We welcome proposal of specific dates in a number of actions as a right step towards raising the level of specificity of the reform process.

Our analysis of the document on an agenda for further change leads us to conclude that it fairly reflects the current state of affairs and provides a convincing diagnosis of existing shortcomings. Up to this point, most if not all Member States and the Secretariat can agree. When it comes to the proposed actions aimed at the implementation of those objectives, Poland, while wholeheartedly supporting most of them, would like to suggest their eventual expansion. In some other cases, we would like to seek further clarifications to dispel our doubts.

We agree with the thrust of action 1, in which the Secretary-General announces that his next proposed programme budget, for 2004-2005, will better reflect the priorities agreed at the Millennium Assembly. At this stage, this is a declaration of intent which corresponds to and is linked with a number of other actions for the streamlining of the planning and budgeting process, improvements required by results-based budgeting and the expansion of the very concept of peacekeeping operations. This set of actions, which, taken together, reflect the concept of results-based management, obviously requires a closer, technical review at the expert level.

The Secretary-General also proposes to renew his earlier concept of sunset provisions, which in previous years was met with reservations. At this juncture, we would like to indicate that it could be useful to review also how new emerging needs and new additional programmes and activities could best be accommodated through streamlined planning and budgetary processes. One way to handle this issue is to identify existing projects and activities which are not of immediate importance, whose impact is less crucial and which could be postponed or implemented by other international organizations, scientific and training institutions or civil society. Now more than in the past, the results-based technique, which focuses on impact and attaining measurable achievements, allows the identification of those activities. Resources thus freed up could then be redirected to new high-priority areas. The General Assembly might revisit a number of its past consensus resolutions, calling for the identification of obsolete, marginally useful or ineffective activities. The title of these resolutions was not very diplomatic. It sounded somehow negative, or even offensive, and it could be changed. But the idea behind that process is sound and could be better applied to present-day requirements.

As an example of the actions that enjoy our full support, let me cite action 5, aimed at strengthening the management capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This is an area of United Nations activities in which my country has accumulated some experience over recent years, most recently from the perspective of the chairmanship of the Commission on Human Rights. We are looking forward to the conclusions and specific action-oriented recommendations of the management review requested by the General Assembly, which is being completed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Representative of the group of measures on which Poland has some doubts and reservations is action 8, which contemplates consolidation of United Nations information centres into regional hubs, starting with Western Europe. The argument in favour of that measure, which means the closure of some information centres, is rationalization and cost-cutting. Poland's experience with United Nations information centres demonstrates that they are a powerful tool at the Organization's disposal and that they play a key role in the function of outreach, liaison with civil society and advocacy of United Nations activities for the general public. Those objectives are a vital part of the new structure of the Department of Public Information, which is outlined in action 6. Hasty decisions to close well-functioning centres in the name of rationalization and expected savings — which first have to be identified as meaningful — could bring more harm than good. Accordingly, we would like to suggest a cautious approach. If the Secretary-General decides to go ahead with his intention to create a Western European hub, we recommend that it be a limited pilot project only. In due time, the results and impact of that project should be properly evaluated and communicated to Member States before further action is taken on the matter.

The exhaustive debate of yesterday and today brings us closer to an understanding and appreciation of the stage of reform now before us. A number of proposed actions are of a highly technical nature and require more detailed debate among experts. Issues such as reforming the planning and budgeting processes, human resources management and conference management would best be discussed in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Similarly,

other issues could usefully be reviewed by the other Main Committees of the General Assembly.

If past practice is a guide, the General Assembly might at a certain moment decide on the need to create a dedicated mechanism — a working group to develop further and agree on the details of reform measures. My delegation declares its readiness to participate in such endeavours to the best of our abilities.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Please allow me, first of all, to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the report he has prepared. Our delegation notes the Secretary-General's intention to further improve the Organization and to adapt it to modern requirements of Member States and to new challenges of our era. Comprehensive reform of the United Nations remains one of the components of the process of the development of the United Nations system. The Organization will not be able to move ahead in solving the most acute problems of this century without having a common recognition of the rules and structures whose activities should become more consistent, predictable and, above all, efficient.

The main task today is to determine the most important areas where the work of the United Nations can be improved in order to strengthen as much as possible the Organization's potential for implementing the guidelines contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as in the final documents of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The recent adoption of these programme documents mentioned above has undoubtedly predetermined the need for a careful analysis and evaluation of all the Organization's activities, including the redistribution of financial resources.

In this connection, we are looking forward to the submission next year by the Secretary-General for the consideration of the General Assembly of a revised draft program budget for the biennium 2004-2005, to permit this document to reflect the priorities stipulated by the above mentioned international conferences. On the basis of a revised draft programme budget and by implementing the Millennium Declaration, along with the decisions adopted at Monterrey and Johannesburg, we hope to further the principles of integrity and universality.

The delegation of Belarus believes that equal attention should be given to all the goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration, many of which have been further specified in the decisions adopted in Monterrey and Johannesburg.

The above-mentioned goals, as is known, cover a wide range of tasks in such areas as overcoming social and economic backwardness and the eradication of the poverty, the protection and encouragement of all human rights, including the right to development, measures in the area of international security and disarmament, and environmental protection.

We note with interest the intention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop and implement, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, a plan to strengthen human rights-related United Nations actions at the country level.

We expect that the General Assembly will show great interest and give comprehensive consideration to this important document.

We also hope that subsequent measures to strengthen the United Nations system will be adopted, taking into account the interests of all States at differing stages of social and economic development. The United Nations needs to facilitate the establishment of stable and irreversible trends in the social and economic development of all States, including through their effective integration into the world economy. Otherwise, we will continue to face situations where, for example, because of large-scale financial crises, dynamically developing economies of individual States are relegated to the status of recipients of international assistance for development.

The Republic of Belarus supports the proposals by the Secretary-General with regard to further improving United Nations activities in the field of public information. We anticipate that, as a result of the proposed restructuring, the personnel of the Department of Public Information (DPI) will be able to improve the scope of information products that are prepared, taking into account the specificity of different regions and the need to provide information regarding United Nations activities that is of direct interest to a particular public. The experience of Belarus' cooperation with the United Nations Radio in the dissemination of information for the attention of

the Belarus public indicates that materials prepared with due account taken of the domestic interests are the most effective ones.

We are confident that in the preparation of the Programme Budget for the biennium 2004-2005 we should envisage the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure the use of advanced information technologies in DPI activities and work to provide information services to Member States.

The need for structural reforms within the United Nations should not overshadow measures intended to rationalize the organizational aspects of the United Nations activities. In this regard, the proposed measures for further improvement and rationalization of the preparation and submission of reports deserve special attention.

We generally share the approach to reduce the number of reports and improve their quality. Belarus supports the aspiration of the Secretary-General to make reports more analytical, informative and more focused on proposed and recommended measures. At the same time, we consider it important in preparing the reports to adhere to the principle of considering every situation on a case-by-case basis, with due account of the opinion of countries in whose interest the report has been requested.

United Nations reform is unattainable without changing the system of planning and the preparation of budgets, which requires serious analysis and review in order to reallocate the resources in accordance with the approved priorities of the Organization.

We cannot help expressing our satisfaction that in recent years there has been some improvement in the United Nations financial situation. At the same time, we should not forget that this is occurring against the background of an ever-increasing scope of United Nations activities dictated by globalization and the new challenges of the present day.

We cannot agree with what we see as a somewhat oversimplified approach contained in the report as to the consideration of the most complex issues of the budgeting and planning processes.

Belarus can agree with the proposal to transform a mid-term plan into a plan covering only two years, including measures for simplifying its preparation. However, we are doubtful as to the need to authorize the Secretary-General to reallocate resources between programmes and budget items up 10 per cent wit single budgetary period. I would like to recall tha distribution and reallocation of resources bet programmes is an extremely sensitive issue reflect balance of interests of major groups of countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm readiness of the Belarus delegation for constru cooperation in the consideration of the prop presented by the Secretary-General, on the basis o common interest, confirmed in the Millen Declaration, to reform the United Nations with a to transforming it into a truly universal institutionally strong organization capable addressing the complex issues dictated by our time

Mr. Jalango (Kenya): At the outset, let convey my delegation's appreciation for the mann which the Assembly President is steering deliberations on this important subject. My deleg welcomes the report of the Secretary-General ent "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agend further change". The report is timely, comprehe and provides useful guidelines for spearheading reforms that would ensure the strengthening o Organization. We appreciate the fact that the Secre General incorporated into his report areas that va delegations had identified as priorities and in ne further clarification.

My delegation associates itself fully with statement made earlier by Egypt on behalf o African Group, as well as with the non-paper tha been circulated outlining the concerns of Af States. My delegation also associates itself with statement made earlier by Venezuela on behalf o Group of 77 and China.

We acknowledge that the priorities for the century, as outlined in the report, are those iden by the Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2), na the fight for development for all the peoples o world; the fight against poverty, ignorance and dis the fight against injustice; the fight against viol terror and crime; and the fight against the degrad and destruction of our common home. My delegati of the opinion, however, that, in order for t priorities to be truly comprehensive, they sh complement the outcomes of other conferences, su the International Conference on Financing Development and the World Summit on Sustai Development.

It is the conviction of my delegation that the political and socio-economic scenario prevailing in the world today, in this era of globalization, needs a strong and effective multilateral institution. We therefore add our voice to those who have called for the need to reaffirm and strengthen the core responsibility of the United Nations capability for collective action. Indeed, that is the guiding principle that led our leaders to adopt the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as to transform the Organization of African Unity into the African Union. We realized that our economies and political structures cannot compete individually in the international arena.

We note with concern the continued inadequate funding from the United Nations regular budget for both the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In that regard, Kenya calls for the strengthening of UNEP and UN-Habitat through the provision of adequate and predictable funding to enable them carry out their mandates in an effective and timely manner.

My delegation calls for further measures aimed at strengthening coordination between Headquarters and regional offices. That, we believe, will eliminate overlapping and duplication of efforts and will ensure cost-effectiveness. We support the proposal of the United Nations Development Group to develop an implementation plan to strengthen the United Nations presence in developing countries. However, in order for that to be effective, it must be accompanied by the provision of adequate resources in terms of both personnel and financing at all levels.

My delegation wishes to seek further clarification on the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, especially its role with regard to the follow-up of NEPAD. Kenya fully supports the view of the African Group that such an Office should be permanent within the United Nations system in order to address African interests on a continuous and permanent basis.

With regard to General Assembly reforms, Kenya fully endorses the achievements attained thus far and welcomes the amendment of rule 30 of the rules of procedure, which has resulted in a smooth transition from the fifty-sixth to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly following the early election of the President and the Vice-Presidents. We call for that move to be institutionalized.

Kenya believes that the General Assembly should assume its role as the principal organ of the United Nations and calls for the streamlining of work and the interaction between the General Assembly and other organs, principally the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. My delegation fully supports the proposal that items and resolutions should be reviewed with a view to reducing their number. We welcome the proposal for the biennialization of items and for the clustering of items dealing with common issues as a means of ensuring economy of time and expenses. We urge that caution be exercised so as to ensure that significant issues — particularly those pertaining to developing countries — are not denied the adequate attention that they deserve.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative, outlined in his report, with regard to supporting human rights at the country level by rationalizing and streamlining the work of the human rights treaty bodies, improving working methods and procedures and streamlining management. That will assist in the improvement of the financial situation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. But Kenya would like to see elections to the membership of the Commission on Human Rights conducted, consistent with established practice, on a regional basis. My delegation notes the Secretary-General's ideas contained in paragraph 46 of the report and seeks further clarification, since we are of the view that the holding of common positions is a normal practice within the Commission on Human Rights.

Kenya reiterates its belief that Member States should be consulted with regard to any plans aimed at expanding the mandates of the Resident Representatives and that all operational activities of the United Nations should conform to the principles of neutrality and multilateralism. In addition, it is Kenya's resolute conviction that States parties to various conventions should be consulted on measures taken to streamline reporting procedures and obligations. Although there is merit in single reporting, the practicability of that proposal should be elaborated further in consultation with Member States, taking into account the mandates establishing the special procedures.

My delegation welcomes the important role played by the United Nations in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As the Assembly is aware, the

African continent has been critically affected by that pandemic, which has reversed our development gains of the past three decades and has increased poverty levels. Kenya has established a National AIDS Control Council, and we are gratified to note that levels of prevalence have shown a marked decrease since the inception of advocacy programmes. We are confident that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will contribute immensely to our endeavours to eradicate this scourge.

As a country that is actively involved in and committed to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Kenya welcomes the implementation of the proposals contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305), especially with regard to the significant improvements made in the Organization's capacity to deploy and manage complex peacekeeping and peace-building operations.

My delegation supports the efforts aimed at improving United Nations public information activities and at enhancing the effectiveness of the Department of Public Information (DPI). In that regard, we welcome the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report with regard to the restructuring of DPI, particularly the possibility of establishing regional information links.

Kenya supports the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at improving the Organization's effectiveness as well as at streamlining the budgetary and administrative procedures of the United Nations. It is in that positive spirit of support that my delegation wishes to submit its comments and views on the report as follows.

With regard to the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a thoroughly revised programme budget to the General Assembly in 2003, my delegation underscores the need to ensure that the revised programme budget reflects the priorities contained in the medium-term plan and other legislative mandates.

Kenya welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals on managing conferences and meetings. In that regard, I have asked the Secretary-General to ensure that there is enhanced and sustained utilization of conference facilities and services in other United Nations duty stations, particularly at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. My delegation appreciates the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General to improve and strengthen the capacity and utilization conference facilities and services at Nairobi, whi have, so far, yielded positive results.

This confirms the viability of the United Natio Office at Nairobi as an important venue and a glob centre for international conferences and programm for the United Nations, as well as for oth governmental bodies. My delegation therefore ca upon the Secretary-General to take pragmatic steps expand and modernize the United Nations conferen facilities at that duty station in view of the challeng to further growth in utilization posed by the inadequa of necessary resources and capacity requirements.

We also welcome the Secretary-Genera proposals on enhancing staff mobility across the Unit Nations system. In that regard, we wish to draw attention of the Secretary-General to the fact that Arabic and English interpretation booths ha remained vacant ever since a permanent Interpretati Service was established at the United Nations Office Nairobi in 2000.

Kenya fully supports the Secretary-Genera intention to review the current system of inter justice, to improve the efficiency of the system and allow staff to have fair and just processing of th complaints. We call upon the newly appoint Ombudsman to resolve some long- pending cases injustice done to employees or former employees of United Nations from developing countries, includi some of my nationals. We note with concern, howev that some of these cases have been outstanding close to more than 10 years.

Let me conclude by reaffirming my delegatio commitment to United Nations reform and to subsequent strengthening of the Organization. We ho that the issues we have raised so far for furt clarification will be given due consideration.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At outset, I would like to extend our sincere thanks Secretary-General Kofi Annan for introducing important report (A/57/387). We commend him for initiatives to reform the work of the Organization various spheres, in order to improve its efficiency to make it a capable Organization, responsive to numerous challenges confronting the world today.

My delegation also supports the statement m by Ambassador Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Perman

Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations, on behalf of the African Group under agenda item 53, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

When considering the reform process, one must acknowledge that reform efforts, by their very nature, require perseverance and careful insight. It is a long, multi-phase process in which one cannot skip one phase and move to the next. The path to reform consists of a series of harmonious, consecutive and regular steps towards the desired objectives.

My delegation, in principle, affirms its support for all reform efforts. We look forward to a comprehensive approach to reform that would make it possible to achieve reform of the major organs of the United Nations system, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and others. Such an approach must also reflect the close links among those organs.

The report before us, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", has given rise to numerous questions, ideas and concepts; it has energized groups and enriched our debate. It has thus laid down a good foundation on which we can build until we complete the structure we seek.

The legitimate question of the priorities governing the work, activities and programmes of the Organization is among those that need definite and categorical answers. At the Millennium Summit, heads of State or Government set the strategic priorities that govern our direction and light the way to the future of humankind. Does the report of the Secretary-General in its present form define new priorities, other than those that were agreed upon? And what has become of the other priorities that have not been included in the Secretary-General's report?

My delegation believes that the report fails to mention many important topics that we had hoped would be discussed, in view of their obvious importance, such as those relating to the Security Council and legal questions.

We highly appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General has accorded special importance to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by mentioning it in action 1. It is important to recall the results of the major conferences that have been convened by the United Nations system over the past two years. Among these conferences, we cite the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, among others, which have added new commitments and specific objectives to the Millennium Declaration. These must all be taken into consideration when debating this question. My country appreciates the contribution made by the United Nations and its agencies towards achieving sustainable development in developing countries. This prompts us to welcome the view reflected in the Secretary-General's action 14, regarding strengthening the work of the United Nations at the country level. In order to ensure the Organization's success in discharging its mandate, it must address the shortage of human resources in its country offices and mobilize the capacities of those offices so that they can carry out their responsibilities.

We need hardly recall the negative effect of the decrease in basic resources on operational activities and, hence, on the development programmes of developing countries. Efforts must therefore be made to tackle that phenomenon by providing new, additional, stable and predictable resources.

The Sudan welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to support and promote human rights at the national level. The Sudan concurs with the African position with regard to the following human rights issues referred to in the Secretary-General's report. First, the universality and coherence of human rights must be respected on a non-selective basis. Secondly, we must strictly abide by the rules that apply with regard to candidature for membership in the Commission on Human Rights, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Thirdly, the views of Member States must be sought with regard to any proposals to broaden the mandate of the Resident Coordinator. Operational activities must also be consistent with the principles of impartiality, universality and multilateralism.

Fourthly, while we welcome the reference in the report to the formulation of guidelines to improve the functioning of the special procedures, we stress the need to debate such proposals with Member States, bearing in mind that they must accord with the mandate granted to the special procedures relevant to human rights.

As to parts of the report relating to information, we strongly support the central role played by public information in the work of this Organization and believe that it must be accorded priority in any reform effort. In this context, we believe that an operational programme of action should be prepared, with a budget to be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session. The preparation of the final programme should be preceded by a series of workshops and by specialized studies undertaken by experts from within and outside the Organization, while strongly emphasizing the need to redeploy resources with a view to making the optimum investment in the services of documentation and periodic and daily publications.

My delegation supports efforts to improve the efficiency of the United Nations and the flow of work with regard to its administrative and budgetary aspects. We hope that the revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, which the Secretary-General plans to submit to the General Assembly in 2003, will reflect the priorities of the mid-term plan called for at the Millennium Summit. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposals for the management of conferences and meetings, as long as they do not affect discussions by the specialized committees relating to improvements in the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

My delegation views with great interest the Secretary-General's request that he be granted further flexibility and powers for redeploying resources among programmes. In this regard, we look forward to the establishment of the necessary mechanism for accountability and control with the aim of studying that request in all its aspects so as to consider the positive and negative impact that it might have on the mandated programmes and activities. Any mandate of authority must be viewed in the light of the provisions and rules of the Charter so as to allow us to get a clear picture of the mandate and the consequent responsibility and accountability.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to review the current internal justice system of the Organization. We believe that such a step will contribute greatly to improving efficiency and to creating a climate of justice, integrity and transparency within the Organization.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General and his team for the report before us today. I would also like to express our gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, for having presented the report to the permanent representatives. The document deals with longstanding problems relating to the quality and efficiency of the management of programmes, and it takes up several major points that Switzerland has long held dear. My country appreciates this initiative.

As the Secretary-General said when he introduced the reform programme, the United Nations must re-examine its activities so as to ensure that it focuses on its priorities and does not waste time or money. The central position as set out in the Millennium Declaration provides an important common thread that runs through all of our efforts to strengthen the United Nations. The United Nations and other inter-governmental bodies can thus rally behind common goals. The Millennium Declaration maps out the road to be followed in restructuring the Organization and engaging in effective partnerships. Analysing the activities of the United Nations from this perspective will enable the Organization to refocus its efforts and make better use its limited human and financial resources.

Other changes outlined in the report are designed to achieve the same end. These include the application of sunset provisions, better targeted publications, reports that are fewer in number but of greater use to Member States and meetings that are less frequent but more productive. We understand that this report on the strengthening of the United Nations does not in any way prejudice the priorities of the Millennium road map.

The statements and proposals of the Secretary-General for more constructive action in the field of human rights are particularly welcome. They respond to our concern about further strengthening the tools used to protect and promote human rights. My country is ready to cooperate substantially in the consideration given to this subject. Switzerland shares the concern of the Secretary-General about the dangers of a Commission on Human Rights that is increasingly polarized. As an observer in that body, my country always promoted dialogue rather than confrontation, and we intend to continue our commitment to constructive and open dialogue. Switzerland views

favourably the suggestion that we streamline the current system of reporting to the treaty control bodies. The reporting system must be simplified and made more transparent for States, committees and civil society. A single country report would convey a clearer, more realistic and efficient picture of the implementation of human rights conventions.

Finally, the regular United Nations budget must have sufficient funds to cover the costs incurred by the treaty-control bodies and the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. We also await with great interest the plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for improving management methods, in particular in the field of human resources.

Improving public information is an important aspect of reform. We are concerned by the fact that United Nations Information Centres in developed countries, where costs are very high, take up 40 per cent of available resources and we welcome, therefore, the proposal to restructure the network of United Nations Information Centres around regional hubs. We note with satisfaction the explanations of the Secretariat that this restructuring of the information network and of conference services will not weaken the capacities in that field of the United Nations Offices at Geneva (UNOG) and Vienna.

Moreover, we are convinced that the United Nations Office at Geneva will be able to play a key role in the future with respect to the European United Nations information hub, not only because the necessary infrastructure and know-how are already in place, but also, thanks to its long tradition of multilingualism and the presence of numerous United Nations specialized agencies and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

As for the coordination of United Nations libraries, we understand the logic of integrated management and the need for modernization. We feel however that there could be cause for concern if the proposed measures were to lead to a larger bureaucracy, the creation of new high-level posts or to a transfer of the general management of the United Nations library in Geneva from the Director General of UNOG to the Department of Public Information in New York.

We are further convinced that good management of the archives of the League of Nations, an organization without historic ties to New York, is an argument for keeping the responsibility for these archives in Geneva.

Another important priority of the United Nations is development cooperation, and we greatly appreciate the various proposals made to improve the operational activities of the United Nations system in the field of development. The formulas proposed by the Secretary-General are the logical consequence of discussions within the framework of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. My country would be happy if more consideration were given to the forms which the presence of the United Nations might assume at the country level. We invite the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the matter and make recommendations without losing sight of the absolute need to maintain the universal character of the United Nations.

In the same vein, another area which could benefit from better management of resources is environmental protection, a subject which is also high on the list of Swiss foreign policy priorities. As was recently stressed in the decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), financial support of the United Nations for UNEP should be increased to provide the necessary resources to guarantee the continuation of its role as a central pillar in the international environmental system.

With regard to the United Nations budget, we are of the opinion that the planning and budgetary process is still unnecessarily complex and involves a large number of staff. It must undergo thorough reform in order to become more efficient. We would like to see a shorter, more strategic budget reflecting the priorities and working programme of the Organization. Similar reforms have been carried out successfully in several large United Nations specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization.

As a new Member State of the United Nations, Switzerland is particularly concerned with the budgetary process of peacekeeping operations. The money allocated for the multiplicity of different budgets is more than double the regular budget. What is more, these budgets are extremely difficult to manage within national accounting systems. That is why we fully support the consolidation of mission

budgets, if only to improve the quality of budget estimates in this field.

Finally, Switzerland agrees with the need to reform the intergovernmental organizations. The Economic and Social Council must be strengthened to be in a position to carry out its orientation work concerning important and complex aspects of development on a global scale. My country is ready to participate actively in realizing this goal. In particular it is important to realign the activities of the Economic and Social Council in its crucial mission of ensuring follow-up for United Nations conferences, and of the Millennium Summit in particular.

We also share the opinion that any reform of the United Nations would not be complete without dealing with the question of the composition and working methods of the Security Council. The Council must reflect the world as it is today if it wishes to maintain its authority and credibility. For this reason, my country favours a limited enlargement of Council membership to avoid weakening its ability to make effective decisions. The Security Council reform project needs new political impetus.

In conclusion, we would like once again to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reform proposals. We assure him of our wholehearted support in achieving its goals. In the meantime, we look forward with great interest to the next biennium and to the presentation of a thoroughly revised programme budget reflecting the new priorities of the Organization.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): First of all, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his important report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change." I will make a number of general comments, and then turn to some more specific ones.

Indonesia has particular interest in the subject of reform of the United Nations. There is no doubt that every report of this nature is a significant milestone in our efforts to transform the United Nations into the Organization that was envisaged by its founders, as recently confirmed by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration.

It is our view that the demands of multilateralism today commend the effective reform of the United Nations to all its Members, as well as to everyone interested in peace and human progress. Reform of United Nations, as an intergovernmental organ, sh continue to strengthen our ability and our capacit this direction.

In this connection, it is important to reflect on fact that United Nations reform has been with us some years, and we think that is long enough for begin to reflect critically on the process and on benefits. In his summary at the beginning of the re the Secretary-General describes the Organizatio "evolving with the times".

In order to ensure that this process contin towards making the United Nations "more effic more open and more creative", Indonesia would lik stress the need for Member States to remain consc of the fact that reform of the United Nations shoul treated as reform of the entire Organization as a wh and not reform of individual parts over time. Un such a holistic and comprehensive approach is mad a cardinal principle in the reform process — we run risk, at tremendous cost, of finding out down the that key areas of the Organization's work have left behind. However, we must also be careful to in this regard that it is not enough to continue to on the basis of proposals and intentions or to engag reform for its own sake. In the past, there have several proposals that have not brought real reform

The delegation of Indonesia firmly believes reforming the Organization to enable it to perfor optimum efficiency may well begin with the way the United Nations organizes its work. To that end support the proposals made by the Secretary-Gener his report aimed at changing and harmoni procedures and processes within the Organizatio make improvement possible.

Having said that, I will now turn to specifics.

In the area of peace and security it is of utmost importance that reform efforts are clo targeted at eliminating areas of current multila cooperation that militate against progress. To pu another way, we must continue to refine and mo our collective and individual behaviour, within context of the United Nations, to enhance the struct and processes that contribute to peace and security.

In that connection, we concur with observation of the Secretary-General that no refor the United Nations would be complete without re

of the Security Council. If the Council is to continue to enjoy worldwide credibility, which it critically needs for its work, not only must its size, composition and working methods be reviewed, but so must the capacity of the Council to act, to do so promptly, and to be seen to be employing the same standards on every agenda item that comes before it. Indeed, the ability of the Security Council to reform itself comprehensively, as is being demanded by the generality of the membership, is crucial to its credibility.

The immediate and most obvious implication of that is that the credibility of the Council carries over into the willingness and readiness of Member States to implement its resolutions and decisions or to make other contributions towards peace, especially in conflict situations. Even more important, as the most important multilateral body of the United Nations, the reform of the General Assembly must continue. Its overloaded agenda must be reordered and balanced by accommodating new and emerging issues so that the Assembly is stronger and more meaningful in facing new challenges.

In that regard, it is imperative to strengthen the Assembly's relationship vis-à-vis other main organs of the United Nations, such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so that the General Assembly will be able to give added value to the work of the Organization.

It is now a truism that peace and development are related. It is not possible to have one without the other. Given that international peace and security are the first concerns of the United Nations, our commitment to reform is our commitment to development and, therefore, to peace. All our intergovernmental processes, which are anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and the Millennium Declaration, must emphasize the developmental imperative as a condition for fulfilling our obligation to peace.

Similarly, we must continue to keep in mind our responsibility and commitment to a number of social and economic objectives. Those are specific and, in the case of the Millennium Declaration, time-bound goals. In the opinion of my delegation, our reform initiatives and methods must not only be motivated and inspired by those objectives, they must also respond to them. That is because they are real and concern real people somewhere — real people who are waiting for the United Nations to fulfil their expectations.

As a result of that, therefore, we must keep in mind during the reform process that reform is not an objective in itself. Reform is justified by a more basic objective, namely, to enhance our work and deliver the benefits of development and peace. Therefore, the programme of work, which should be organized around the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration and the results of the main conferences, needs to support the Organization's efforts in the field of development.

In that regard, we welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General to create an additional Assistant Secretary-General post to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. We, however, would like to emphasize that this should ensure that the development programme is the top priority of the Organization.

My delegation notes the attention paid by the Secretary-General to issues and activities concerning Africa. In particular, we support the proposal to assign the Secretary-General's Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa the responsibility of coordinating and guiding the reports and input for Africa-related matters in the Secretariat and to transfer under his responsibility the resources currently allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Human rights, the promotion and protection of which is a bedrock requirement under the Charter for the realization of our vision of a just and peaceful world, is a subject of special interest to my delegation. To that end, we support the proposal by which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will consult with treaty bodies on new streamlined reporting procedures and submit recommendations to the Secretary-General. Similarly, in connection with the improvement of special procedures, we also support the proposal by which the High Commissioner will undertake a review and make recommendations towards enhancing their effectiveness and improving the support provided.

My delegation understands the need to have more pragmatic action at the field level to integrate human rights components. Many countries have started to adopt upstream projects in the context of the country cooperation framework. However, the principle of such projects being country-driven should be the main consideration in developing projects at the country

level. We would therefore like to express our concern about proposals with a global approach including human rights elements at the field level that might not be priorities of individual Member States, as every country has its own individual characteristics. Moreover, including such elements would be contrary to the principle of country-driven implementation of operational activities for development.

Taking all that into consideration, it is the view of my delegation that the proposal to simplify and improve planning and budgeting merits consideration in order to eliminate some of the burdens of the current arrangements. However, we would like to underline that a streamlined mechanism should not compromise the purpose of carrying out priority programmes mandated by Member States. With particular reference to the proposal to merge the intergovernmental review of plans and budgets now being performed by both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, under the aegis of the Fifth Committee, we would suggest that careful consideration be exercised in this matter.

Turning to human resources management, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General towards the attainment of a world-class staff, to enable the Secretariat to deliver adequate services to Member States. We, however, would like to emphasize that any human resources policy adopted by the Secretary-General needs to achieve the imperatives of geographical diversity and gender balance, without compromising excellence in the quality of personnel, who are the strength of the Organization.

We believe it to be the responsibility of Member States to consider carefully the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in this report, and to support fully the decisions arrived at by the General Assembly. It is important to ensure that process is Member State-driven, not Secretariat-driven. We must further ensure that the process is transparent and participatory. With that in mind, Indonesia stands ready and willing to offer its full participation.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I would like to express our gratitude and thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and all-encompassing report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). We commend the clear, methodical and action-oriented manner in which he presents his case for reform and innovation. The report indicates very clearly the Secretary-General's bol practical, agenda and far-sighted vision for the U Nations in the new millennium as it confronts the challenges that lie ahead. We also commen Secretary-General for his strong determination to those changes. The report is testimony to his fir unshakeable commitment to the United Nations main and indispensable vehicle towards inc multilateralism in the complex and interconn world we live in today. I would also li acknowledge the role in, and contribution to exercise of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréc

Let me also say that my delegation asso itself with the views of the Chair of the Group expressed yesterday at in this body with regard report.

Many of the proposals and recommendatio action contained in the report are commendabl can be supported and implemented, especially that fall under the Secretary-General's own aut Others that directly affect Member States wou course, have to be dealt with by them throug appropriate consultative mechanisms.

My delegation fully shares the view th reform and revitalization of the Organization sho an ongoing process involving all of its organ General Assembly, the Security Council, the Eco and Social Council and the Secretariat. Reform just for the sake of reform but has the purp reorienting the Organization and its entire system needs and challenges of our times. We agree that has been achieved. But much remains accomplished. There is a need to ensure th Organization will be able not only to carry traditional role and functions but also to perfor tasks and fulfil new goals in the context of the evolving global situation.

The General Assembly has over the past 10 adopted various decisions and resolutions to rev itself. The ongoing efforts by the President General Assembly to rejuvenate the exerci focusing on the implementation of previous reso should be pursued. We have, in fact, made modest achievements such as, among other thin much welcomed clustering of certain items agenda of the General Assembly and management of conference time and resource decision to have early elections of the Preside

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees has also enabled the Organization to plan its timetable more efficiently, thereby contributing to a more effective and meaningful debate.

My delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General's observation that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Progress on that reform, regrettably, has been painfully slow in spite of almost a decade of deliberations among Member States. We also share his view that a reform process that consisted only of an increase in Council membership would be unlikely to strengthen the Council unless it were accompanied by the capacity to make prompt and realistic decisions and the political will to act on them. We strongly endorse his proposal for a codification of the recent changes in the practice of the Council so that they may become permanent rather than remaining ad hoc or temporary features which may lapse over time.

As an incoming member of the Economic and Social Council, Malaysia places great hopes and expectations on the further strengthening of that important Council and will work with others towards that end. We strongly support the dialogue process that has been established with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, thereby giving the United Nations the important role that it should play in influencing development and socio-economic policies and strategies that affect Member States. We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's intention to ensure improved Secretariat support for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That is essential for the more effective functioning of those two principal organs of the United Nations.

My delegation also agrees that the United Nations has a story to tell, and that it must be told in a way that will raise the Organization's prestige and credibility and inspire confidence in, and respect for, it. As the most truly universal intergovernmental organization that deals with a broad range of issues affecting humanity, its achievements, disappointments and future expectations should be told to its diverse audience so as to create a better appreciation of the many constraints, difficulties and challenges that it faces, as well of the opportunities that could be harnessed with the support of Member States. The Department of Public Information has an important role to play as an information conduit between the Organization and its peoples. Malaysia strongly supports the efforts to reposition the Department to face the challenges of the new century so as to enable it to implement its mandate.

The Secretary-General had already submitted a comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/2002/2) to the Committee on Information in May 2002. The actions proposed by the Secretary-General in his present report are very similar to those submitted to the Committee on Information. We look forward to a fruitful discussion of this in the Fourth Committee.

Action 1, to submit to the General Assembly in 2003 a thoroughly revised programme budget that better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly, constitutes an important and commendable step towards achieving the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. It is proposed that attention should also be given to achieving goals and targets set at other United Nations conferences and summits, particularly the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The revised budget suggested by the Secretary-General in that action should take into account not only the goals and targets set in the Millennium Declaration but also the targets and goals contained in the outcomes of other relevant conferences and summits.

Malaysia welcomes the implementation plan that will soon be developed to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. The proposed action plan which includes, inter alia, joint programming, pooling of resources, common databases and knowledge networks, dedicated support for resident coordinators, and integrated planning, budgeting and resources mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflicts are, indeed, laudable and deserve strong support. These are practical measures designed to further enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system, premised on the best and most efficient utilization of its resources. We trust there will be close consultations with national Governments, as the principal clients of United Nations in-country programmes and activities, in order to ensure the full participation of Member States in developing any new planning mechanisms or instruments, including the common country assessment, common reporting and joint evaluations and resource mobilization tools at the national level.

We also welcome the proposal for a document clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation, which is to be prepared by a target date of September 2003. We believe that it will help address the problem of duplication and overlap. Clarifying who does what in the area of technical cooperation is, indeed, very important, given the limited resources, capabilities and programme-reach of the international institutions.

My delegation supports the proposal to create an additional position of Assistant Secretary-General to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the establishment of a policy planning unit in that Department. In our view, the creation of such a post is important, as the issue of coherence is well reflected in the Monterrey Consensus. It is, however, important to avoid any duplication of mandates, and it is important that the Assistant Secretary-General appointed should have the responsibility and capacity to interact effectively with the institutional and other stakeholders identified in the Monterrey Consensus, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

Given the special problems of Africa, we support the proposal to have the Secretary-General's Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa coordinate and guide the preparation of reports and input for Africa-related debates of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. To that end, resources allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries should be transferred to the Adviser's Office. This proposal is in line with the resolution adopted on the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We look forward to receiving more information from the Secretary-General on the organization and structure of the Office, as requested by the resolution. We support the merging of the Special Coordinator's Office with the Office of the Adviser as a further effort to consolidate and effectively address the issues of development in Africa.

Mr. Laoteggueinodji (Chad), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to enhance and increase the opportunities for promotion to the Professional level of the General Service Staff. Such staff should be rewarded not only because they are a source of skill and expertise but also because they are the Organization's priceless treasure, as they hold a large portion of the institutional memory of the United Nations. We also support the Secretary-General's idea to help United Nations staff balance their professional and private lives and to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the Organization by attracting and retraining younger people. In that regard, we fully support the continuing improvement in and innovation of the area of human resources management.

On the issue of human rights, my delegation takes note of action 2 contained in the report. We note in particular that the measures outlined in the report pertain to the incorporation of human rights standards into the country programmes of its specialized agencies, funds and programmes without any mention being made of requests by States or of collaboration with them. This issue has been extensively debated as far back as 1997, when the Secretary-General first presented a report on reforms (A/51/590 and Add.1-6). My delegation was among those that were against this idea; our position on the issue has not changed.

We note also that in developing and implementing a plan to strengthen human-rights-related actions at the country level, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would only be consulting with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs. We certainly hope that Member States will have a role in the exercise, given the fact that these actions and programmes are to be implemented at the national level, which would necessarily require close consultations with Governments.

We welcome the proposal that the High Commissioner for Human Rights make recommendations on new streamlined reporting procedures, as proposed in action 3. However, since members of treaty bodies serve in their individual capacities, and since not all parties are represented in any given treaty body at any given time, my delegation would strongly recommend that the High Commissioner consult with Member States parties to each of the six treaties, as opposed to only Committee members. We also look forward to a proper discussion of the High Commissioner's recommendations to the Secretary-General when he submits them in September 2003.

My delegation is fully supportive of action 4. We have long believed that the various special procedures

created need to be more coherent. Special rapporteurs, for instance, play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Their credibility will be greatly enhanced and their mandate respected if they operate under the principles of fairness, objectivity and non-selectivity. In other words, they must manifest the highest standards of professionalism in carrying out their mandates. It is in that regard that the High Commissioner has a role to play to ensure that these principles become a mainstay of the operationalization of the mandates of the special procedures. Again, my delegation looks forward to discussing the recommendations to be put forward by the High Commissioner in 2003 in that regard.

My delegation welcomes the concept of working better together, both within the system and with civil society. We note the intention to forge enhanced interaction with civil society and the Secretary-General's decision to establish a high-level panel to make recommendations in that regard. We note, too, his intention to establish a partnership office to coordinate the relationship with the private sector. We welcome these initiatives, but we must not lose sight of the essentially intergovernmental character of the United Nations.

We are particularly attracted to the new approach and different way of doing the business of the United Nations advocated by the Secretary-General. However, given the sheer size of the United Nations and its entire system and the difficulty of effecting and managing change involving a vast bureaucracy, the challenges are enormous and will require determined and sustained effort on the part of the Secretary-General and his staff as well as strong and sustained support by Member States. The goals are clear and the strategies for the attainment of those goals appear to be sound. What remain are the determination and resolve or will to carry the process forward in a step-by-step but expeditious fashion involving all stake-holders. Therein lies the challenge. My delegation will play a constructive role in the process.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to address my compliments to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the fruitful efforts he has made together with his outstanding team since 1997 to have our Organization adopt an innovative strategy commensurate with the breadth, complexity and diversity of the challenges which face mankind at the beginning of this millennium.

While in recent years we have observed real and laudable progress in rationalizing United Nations activities, it must be noted that in this particular area a number of improvements still seem to be necessary and possible, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387).

While fully associating myself with the views expressed so brilliantly by my good friend Ambassador Aboul Gheit, Permanent Representative of Egypt, on behalf of the African Group, I would like to briefly single out some aspects which, in our view, are of particular importance.

I reaffirm how firmly Senegal supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to ensure that the various components of our Organization work better together — I would almost say in synergy — to make their action more coordinated, more purposeful and more effective. That is why we believe that the reforms should measure up to the goals we have laid out by meeting one fundamental criterion: efficiency. Thus, the pooling of resources and the joint programming of activities of the various components of the United Nations should not undermine what the Organization does or lead to bottlenecks or overlapping in relations between the United Nations and the various areas in which it works.

This concern for efficiency and clarity should also be strictly observed at United Nations Headquarters, where the Secretary-General has created the post of Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, thus reflecting the resolve of the United Nations to get solidly in step with the reiterated determination of the heads of State and the peoples of Africa to make the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) the preferred framework for a strong alliance between the continent and its partners.

To that end, we think it is of paramount importance to ensure that the Adviser, far from confining himself to preparing for routine meetings on Africa, should also get down to the task of promoting and coordinating the support of all our friends for the genuine implementation of NEPAD's goals.

This concern for clarity is equally applicable to the proposal of the Secretary-General that the

partnership among the United Nations, civil society and the private sector should be strengthened in a matter which is of considerable urgency these days, that is the burning question of human rights.

How can we better ensure that these rights are exercised fully on the national and global levels? Is the system of treaties and special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights still well adapted to the current international context? And what role can the United Nations play to modernize them if necessary? The report of the Secretary-General has raised real issues and has sketched out a number of real replies which call for more dynamic and thorough — some might even say holistic — consideration.

It is true that States parties to international legal instruments on human rights are weighed down by complex, rigid and daunting obligations which are difficult to perform, particularly the requirement to submit periodic reports according to strict timetables, reports whose relevance and frequency, and therefore unrealistic number, need to be reviewed in the light of the additional constraints thus imposed on small Member States.

Nonetheless, Senegal maintains that it is up to States parties, within the framework of competent statutory bodies, to consider this range of problems, which will certainly require an amendment to international treaties. To that end, perhaps a joint meeting of all States parties to the various international instruments related to human rights could be convened as a special measure.

In any event, my delegation believes that today, we must rationalize institutional and legal human rights machinery, even in the thicket of the 40 existing special procedures. In that connection, Senegal considers that the comments of the African Group concerning the part of the Secretary-General's report devoted to human rights should be taken into account in any reform project — that is, reform of the institutional architecture and of the modernization of human rights mechanisms, including in the context of United Nations actions to reach out to the public at large.

My delegation, therefore, highly values the crucial role of the Department of Public Information, both in promoting the objectives and strategies of the Organization and in the regular follow-up of its programmes. More generally, my delegation would like to endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations aimed at establishing a policy of monitoring and evaluation of the information sector's impact on the Organization's activities, which should be marked by transparency and effectiveness. That unquestionably justifies the remodelling of Information Centres — an exercise that, in developing countries and particularly in Africa, must be carried out in a far-sighted, prudent and methodical way because of the lack of resources available to the Centres and their positive impact on the media environment of the countries concerned.

As a corollary, we must give some thought to the real desirability and the exorbitant cost of the endless succession of summits, world conferences and other United Nations meetings — the Secretary-General lists no fewer than 15,484 during the biennium 2000-2001 — whose existence and disappointing results erode, devalue or obliterate the value, relevance and authority of the regular and special sessions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council — a body of which my country has just become a member.

With regard to the innumerable reports and follow-ups — reports are estimated at 5,879 — which few delegations have the leisure to read or even to peruse, my delegation would like to cite the chronic problem of quality, volume and delays with regard to publishing documentation, deploring the fact that Member States — particularly those delegations that speak French — are not always treated the same, the sacrosanct principle of multilingualism notwithstanding.

Hence the twofold need, first, to reduce significantly the number of official meetings and the frightening volume of documentation, and secondly, to strengthen the Department of Public Information with adequate budgetary resources and the means to, inter alia, update the United Nations web site daily in all official languages. That was proposed by Russia, which Senegal joins in criticizing the growing gap between English and the other official languages, without prejudice regarding the urgent need, cited by the United States, to establish a reliable protection system for global electronic information networks and the Internet through the creation of a world culture of cybersecurity.

Also important is the recurrent question of strengthening the working relations between the Department of Public Information and the Department

of Peacekeeping Operations so as to ensure, through the efficient management of information, the increased effectiveness and legitimacy of peacekeeping operations.

In that connection, the problem of the financial fragility of the United Nations arises once again with even more urgency because of the exorbitant and mounting arrears in assessments, which by 30 September amounted to $2.4 billion, half of which is owed by one Member State, principally for peacekeeping operations. Such a situation, totally at odds with commitments proclaimed elsewhere, seriously compromises the capacity of the United Nations to carry out its mandates and to reimburse troop contributors. With the assistance of Member States, the Secretary-General absolutely must resolve the daunting equation faced by the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, such as Senegal. The least developed countries suffer considerably from the arrears and delays in reimbursement, to the extent that some States run the risk — and we have seen this repeatedly in the recent past — of having to confront situations of revolt, instability and even armed rebellion sometimes caused by rules and delays with respect to the payment of sums owed by the United Nations for peacekeeping operations.

It is gratifying to note that the report of the Secretary-General has not lost sight, furthermore, of the need to rationalize administrative and budgetary practices in order to facilitate the effective management of the Organization's priorities. In that context, the revised programme budget to be presented in 2003 by the Secretary-General must somehow integrate the development goals set by the Millennium Summit and those of the Monterrey and Johannesburg Summits, as well as the other priorities set forth in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In the process of updating and fine-tuning procedures, it is especially important that scrupulous respect be paid to the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms covering programme planning and execution as well as human resource management, taking due account of the enlightening observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which are generally endorsed by the Fifth Committee.

In conclusion, I should like once again to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for this excellent report, which is edifying in many respects and which, enriched by the contributions of Member States, will be as valuable as the effectiveness of the proposals that are acted upon. That is why we think it crucial to categorize the proposals and to determine the levels at which their implementation should be carried out, with the understanding that appropriate administrative leeway and budgetary flexibility should be accorded the Secretary-General — of course, with the hindsight of the ACABQ.

Introducing those changes to the architecture of the United Nations must obey certain principles of structural and managerial order. Furthermore, in our view, it will realize a philosophy that is gradually gaining ground in an Organization intended to repudiate the world order of 1945, in order to celebrate in its actions the perennial ideals of justice and democracy. In other words, the field of reform is so vast that, we hope, Member States will soon reconsider the working methods of bodies such as the Security Council and its growing propensity to invest in areas of activity that are under the purview of the General Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council, instead of focusing systematically, rather than circumstantially, on its true statutory reason for being: to promote peace and security.

The United Nations must be more ready to shoulder its primary responsibilities and to realize the humanistic principle of multilateralism by resolutely rising to the requirements of democratic transparency, which the new configuration of international relations must necessarily reflect.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The strengthening of an institution consists of strengthening its organs. The fact that we are at present engaged in the task of finding the best way to improve the functioning of three of the five major organs of the United Nations that are still active is eloquent evidence of the need to adapt the Organization to the demands of an international society which is itself evolving constantly.

The reforms in each of those three organs are being carried out separately, but they all seek the same goal: to make those organs more effective instruments for achieving our common goals. But the modalities of

each of those processes are different. With respect to the Security Council, we are seeking the reform of its membership in order to make it more representative and more democratic. As for the General Assembly, we are attempting to revitalize it so that its decisions regain their authority and political legitimacy. In the Secretariat, the goal is changes in its functioning to improve its efficiency. Those three processes are closely linked and, to an extent, the results of each process will affect the results of the other two. But in spite of those close connections, we believe the reform processes should continue to be carried out as they have been so far: separately, each one in its respective sphere of competence.

We are meeting today to examine the measures that the Secretary-General proposes in his report (A/57/387 and Corr.1) in order to make changes in specific areas under his responsibility. The common idea underpinning all those measures is that the Organization should focus its activities on issues that are most important at present and on those that will be most important in the future.

Uruguay fully agrees with the objectives set out in the report and the general orientation of the changes proposed. We particularly welcome initiatives to strengthen institutions and mechanisms that ensure universality and respect for human rights. The great work accomplished by the United Nations over the first two decades of its existence, which put the protection of human rights on the international agenda in a definitive and irreversible manner, cannot be left incomplete. To ensure that human beings the world over have full enjoyment of their rights, we must strengthen monitoring mechanisms and develop means to bring offenders before the law. The proposals of the Secretary-General are an important step in that direction.

Uruguay is now in a position to support many of the measures proposed in the report, not only in the area of human rights but also in the areas of public information and the budgeting and planning process.

We have doubts on some of those measures. In the course of the informal consultations held last week, the Group of 77 asked the Secretary-General a number of questions. We trust that the additional information to be provided by the Secretary-General in response to those questions will dispel our doubts.

My delegation understands that, w prejudice to these misgivings, the Secretary-G should proceed to put into practice those mea whose implementation does not require the app o the Assembly, for example, the preparatio combined reports, which would be more condense concise. When we see the results of that measur can decide whether it is a good idea. This procedu carrying out a measure then judging the results s be applied to all those measures that the Secr General has the power to put into practice.

With regard to measures relating to the syst planning and budgeting, I would like to recall th Organization has already demonstrated its spir renewal and its capacity to adapt in that area. Tha demonstrated by the introduction of results-b budgeting.

We welcome the fact that the Secretary-Ge has based his proposed changes in the fiel budgeting and planning on the criterion of refle the priorities of the international community formulated in the Millennium Declaration. It is that in order to identify those priorities, we hav draw on the outcomes of the Monterrey Conferen Financing for Development and the Johannes Summit on Sustainable Development. The Secre General has promised us for next year a re programme budget that better reflects the ag priorities. We look forward with great interes receiving that text.

But, above all else, focusing our efforts priorities will depend on changes in the wor methods and functioning of the General Assembl the consultations on the revitalization of the Assem we will continue to suggest measures to enable organ to focus on the most important issues.

The recommendation for improving plannin the budgetary process is well supported in the re The proposal for a mid-term plan focused on a pe of time closer to the present is in keeping with changing challenges the Organization faces. Simil an outline of the budget, which would be detailed briefer, combined with the mid-term plan, undoubtedly facilitate the process of negotiating budget and its approval.

We have certain reservations about the Secret General's request for greater flexibility in transfer resources between programmes and budgetary ite

The Secretary-General should provide us with more detailed information. The problem lies in the fact that in our national administration — and I believe this is the case in other national administrations — a fundamental principle of planning and budgetary performance is the prohibition on transferring funding from one programme to another. That prohibition exists at all levels of national administration. Even in the case of the very limited budget of our own mission, we cannot reallocate funds. I do not know whether it would be acceptable to apply in an international organization practices prohibited in national administrations.

Furthermore, we are concerned that funds destined for programmes assisting developing countries might be reallocated to finance other activities that the Secretary-General considers a high priority. Naturally, we have complete confidence in the good judgement and discretion of the Secretary-General. But it might happen that in some cases, his priorities may be different from ours. Something that continues to occur is that funds allocated for peacekeeping operations are used to finance other expenses of the Organization. We cannot agree with that practice. Delays in the payment of the personnel of a peacekeeping operation, in particular, delays in reimbursement for the use of equipment has created financial problems for us, sometimes serious ones. For that reason, I suggest the request for greater flexibility in reassigning resources should be accompanied by proposals for some kind of consultative procedure or prior supervisory procedure in which the General Assembly or the countries concerned would take part.

The Secretary-General is very eloquent in highlighting the deficiencies that exist in the budgeting and planning process. There is no doubt that radical changes should be made. The Group of 77 would like to know, among other things, if the Secretary-General is suggesting the elimination of the Committee for Programme (CPC) and Coordination, a possibility that should not be dismissed — after, of course, the case has been properly made. That body, according to the report, is costly, complicates procedures and results in duplication. Certainly, if we eliminate the CPC — a body, I would note in passing, of which Uruguay has been, and is still, a member — the work of the Fifth Committee would be increased. However, this could be partly offset by a slight increase in the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The report we are considering abounds in ideas and proposals that give my delegation considerable food for thought. We hope to have an opportunity to express our views at subsequent stages of this process.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): We join other Member States in welcoming the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations. The findings and recommendations contained in the report merit our serious consideration.

My delegation agrees with the view of the Secretary-General that United Nations reform is not an event but an ongoing process, with room for further improvement. In this regard, we consider the report to be a timely and appropriate initiative as a follow-up to the first phase of the 1997 reform initiative.

In considering the issue of Security Council reform, we need to proceed in a manner that is both democratic and reflective of our current environment. My delegation is of the view that, due to the inter-linkages between the Council's structure and its decision-making procedures, these issues are best considered in a single context. With regard to the issue of enlargement, since we believe that as many Member States as possible should be given the opportunity to serve on the Council, we consider the suggestion of increasing only the number of non-permanent seats to be a viable option.

Of equal importance is the need to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council, in the light of the important global economic and social concerns that it is being called upon to address. We would like to acknowledge the progress made in organizing its work to give greater focus to thematic issues such as the establishment of dialogue between the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. We believe that it is important for us to follow up and hold periodic reviews on concretizing this channel of cooperation. At the same time, we need to ensure that the agenda and format of the Economic and Social Council are more focused and that effective preparations are made for its session.

The holding of numerous United Nations global conferences has burdened not only the Secretariat but

also its Member States. We acknowledge that United Nations global conferences and the Millennium Declaration have had a positive impact through the promotion of international cooperation on issues of importance, inter alia, in the field of development. However, we believe that the time has come to take stock of the results achieved so far in those forums. In particular, my delegation is of the view that, from now on, emphasis should be placed on the process of implementation of the outcomes.

Let me now turn to actions to reform human rights mechanisms. All four areas identified in the Secretary-General's report are important. Of these, my delegation places particular emphasis on the need to streamline the reporting procedures to the six treaty bodies. We believe that progress is required in both directions: greater coordination and standardization of work among the committees and reduction of the burden on the States parties. In all cases, the integrity of the treaty bodies should be upheld. We would also like to point out that endeavours to mainstream human rights into all activities of the United Nations should be sustained and strengthened.

The reform policy of the Department of Public Information should focus on selective and important fields, but only after a cost-effective assessment is undertaken. Regarding its structural reform, it would be better to make changes to the existing organization than to establish a new one.

We further believe that structural reform should be implemented in line with the information technology trends of the twenty-first century. The information age in which we live has made it much easier to access information. In this regard, we welcome the integration of 13 United Nations Information Centres in Western Europe into a regional hub. Apart from establishing an effective information hub, this process will conserve the resources needed for pursuing priority activities. In due course, a similar approach could be adopted for the other regions. Furthermore, my delegation is of the view that printed publications should be further streamlined and reduced, in light of the Department of Public Information's plan to strengthen and centralize its Web-based communication.

My delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's submission of a thoroughly revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that appropriately reflects the priorities set by Millennium Declaration and other major conferen

We hope that, in the preparation and subm of the next biennium budget, the Secretariat will out a critical review of the current programme activities, and identify outputs and activities whi considered obsolete, of marginal usefulnes ineffective. Those outputs and activities shou listed and presented to the General Assembly as of the proposed programme budget, whereb Member States could decide which outputs activities should be terminated and which ones s be kept alive in our future work programme.

In the case of new programmes, my dele supports the inclusion of sunset provisions to e that regular reviews are made, and believes renewals should be granted only by explicit acti the Assembly.

We also stress that the multifarious trust should be consolidated and their manage streamlined, so as to improve the overall contro administration of the funds.

Regarding the allocation of resource priorities, my delegation concurs with the Secr General's assessment that the current planning budgeting process should be streamlined coherence and coordination among budg implementation and evaluation processes shou further strengthened so that one phase of the b cycle may serve as a framework for the subse phases.

My delegation further believes that the re proposals of the two-year medium-term plan realignment of the functions of the Committe Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Comm and the strengthening of evaluation and monit should be discussed in detail and elaborated withi appropriate bodies of the United Nations.

My delegation has taken note of the propos grant the Secretary-General more flexibilit reallocating programmes and between staff and staff costs. In our view, should any change i current mechanism be deemed necessary after f deliberations, it should be carried out in a way enhances the efficient use of resources and en managerial accountability.

The United Nations staff is an important asset and a vital link to the performance of this Organization. The successful implementation of the programmes and mandates is very much dependent upon the performance of the staff. Therefore, in order to revitalize the Organization, its staff must be highly motivated, competent and up to the task.

In the past, we have seen many cases of competent young professionals leaving the Organization due to lack of career prospects and other reasons. In order to attract, motivate and retain a highly competent staff as a matter of priority, we must put a reasonable and transparent personal management system in place.

My delegation welcomes the new system of management put into operation on 1 May 2002. We hope that this new system will be instrumental in enhancing objectivity and transparency in recruitment, placement and promotion. As has been proposed by the Secretary-General, horizontal staff mobility must be enhanced throughout the United Nations system. The performance appraisal should be further reviewed. Moreover, delegation of authority should follow clear lines of authority and stress managerial responsibility and accountability.

Regarding the Secretary-General's proposal to lift the restrictions on the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category, my delegation still believes that the national competitive examination programme is the best and fairest means of recruiting professional staff to the Organization at the entry level. This is especially appropriate in the light of the need for equal treatment between internal and external candidates, the age profile of the staff, and equitable geographical distribution.

Another matter of concern to my delegation is the proposal to create a new Assistant-Secretary-General post in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. My delegation would like to see further consideration of this matter in the context of the next biennium budget before we make a final decision.

My delegation takes note that many of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report have potential financial implications. While not viewing the reform process as only a budget-cutting exercise, my delegation strongly believes that budgetary discipline should be one of the guiding principles in our deliberations on the proposed reform initiatives.

In closing, my delegation looks forward to participating actively in the discussions of the reform package proposed by the Secretary-General with a view to achieving our common objective of a revitalized United Nations.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the document entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", which represents another stage in the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations. We believe that we must move forward in this process even more quickly than we have until now. In this statement, I will mention only some priorities.

In order to be more efficient, we need to strengthen the main bodies of the United Nations and their cooperation so as to be able to avoid overlaps and duplication and to encourage the complementarity of our work. The Economic and Social Council has already started to undertake steps towards the rationalization of its work and better coordination between its functional commissions and various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The process of revitalization of the General Assembly has just begun and we believe that we need to take bigger steps and decisions in order to make this universal forum stronger, its work more efficient and its decisions more respected.

As there is a broad consensus on some issues, we believe that, with dedicated joint efforts and the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, we can move forward in quite a short period of time. The process of the reform of the Security Council will probably take longer, but we should continue with the dialogue. We need creative thinking and probably a sort of package deal in which each of us will gain more than lose. Let me remind members that the dialogue on Security Council reform has already had some beneficial side effects, for example better transparency and the opening of the Council's work.

Cooperation between the main United Nations bodies is also improving. In 2002, the participation of the President of the Economic and Social Council in the deliberations of the Security Council has become an established practice whenever appropriate. The same applies to the participation of the President of the Security Council in the work of the Economic and

Social Council. The ad hoc groups on Africa of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council are also cooperating closely. If the experiment with the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau turns out to be successful, which I firmly believe it will, it will pave the way for similar future post-conflict peace-building activities and open a whole new chapter regarding possible close cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. The work of the General Assembly — especially its Second and Third Committees — and the Economic and Social Council should be better coordinated as well. The issue has been discussed at the level of the Presidents of the two bodies, but it requires more systematic efforts and a comprehensive solution.

Finally, the Economic and Social Council's cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should be strengthened and better structured. This cooperation is beneficial to both. The Bretton Woods institutions will thereby increase their legitimacy, while the Economic and Social Council will benefit from its increased influence and leverage in global decision-making.

We fully support the Secretary-General's opinion that we must align our activities with priorities. We have clear instructions and goals that we all agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration. In that regard, we support the intention of the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in 2003 a thoroughly revised programme budget that better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly. We also commend the Secretary-General for suggesting that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector be included much more in our work. We should be open to cooperation and should be creative in finding new ways to bring NGOs and the private sector on board.

In today's globalizing world, efforts to promote and protect human rights have, or should have, a universal character. Therefore, we fully welcome the section of the report concerned with strengthening human rights. We share the opinion of the Secretary-General that Member States should be governed, in voting on and debating issues before the Commission on Human Rights, by the genuine effort to strengthen human rights throughout the world. Attainment of human rights promotion and protection goals should not be diverted by various political deal credibility of the Commission should jeopardized.

Besides the Commission on Human R are a number of treaty bodies and hu mechanisms and procedures that constitute intricate framework. The size and comple system should be addressed by a more approach to their activities. This is espe when we look at the reporting requireme committees under major human rights t conventions, which should be standar streamlined.

The Republic of Croatia firmly be effort.s for the promotion and protection rights must begin at the national level. The strongly support the proposed action to human-rights-related United Nations activi country level.

In conclusion, we firmly believe tha move more quickly in the reform process support the intention of the Secretary-G undertake, within his authority, some of t cited in the report. We think that the report c guidelines regarding activities that should upon among States, and that we should not deliberations. My delegation is ready t participate in that process.

Mr. Nambiar (India): On behalf of I happy to participate in this debate on strengt United Nations system and to have the opp offer the comments of my delegation on the made by the Secretary-General in his repo "Strengthening of the United Nations: an further change" (A/57/387). We would like our appreciation to the Deputy Secretar Ms. Louise Fréchette, for the detailed explan gave during various interactions and at the consultations convened by the President of t Assembly on 24 October 2002.

We would like to convey our deep appr the Secretary-General for coming forward wi comprehensive proposals for continuing h agenda as a sequel to the proposals that he pr the beginning of his first term, in July *A/51/950 and Add.1-6*). The proposals cove functional areas and the working of the Or

and give suggestions for improvement from both strategic and practical perspectives.

Like many other delegations, India looks upon reform as a continuing process — a kind of work in progress. The United Nations has had several reform exercises, beginning with the expansion of the Security Council in the mid-1960s. Planning and programme budgets were introduced in the mid-1970s, and attempts at restructuring the intergovernmental machinery and Secretariat support structures in the economic and social field were made in the late 1980s. Over the past three years there have been attempts to revitalize the working of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The reform proposals of the Secretary-General form part of that sequence of exercises. It is for the Member States to try to give effect and substance to this felt need to improve the working of the United Nations.

Like many other delegations, India has expressed broad political support for the process of reforms. We have done this at different levels since the proposals of the Secretary-General for reforms were presented last month. This is in line with our belief that the effectiveness of the United Nations and the enhancement of its responsiveness to the priorities of Member States are critical, particularly for the developing countries that constitute the vast majority of its membership.

Before commenting on specific elements of the package of proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, it is pertinent to recall that some of the other agenda items being considered by the General Assembly are also related to this item. We have in mind, in particular, the items relating to the revitalization of the General Assembly (agenda item 53) and to the integrated follow-up to global conferences (agenda item 92). It is important to take a holistic view of the structures and processes so that the reforms and changes sought to be introduced under the various items pull together in the same direction and endure in the long run.

The Secretary-General has clarified at the outset that the reform proposals should not be seen as an exercise in cost-cutting. The reform measures should have the primary objective of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. If, at the end of the exercise, it is found that the costs will go up as a result of the restructuring, Member States should demonstrate the requisite political will to support the reform measures by agreeing to such increase in expenses.

We note that there are some reform measures that are within the competence of the Secretary-General and that effect can be given to these under his own authority. It is only in those areas that require the prior approval of Member States or where there is need for joint action with Member States that he will need the General Assembly to provide specific authorization. Even here, we discern that there are some measures which could be implemented without much difficulty. There are some areas where a process could be initiated after the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary-General to launch such process.

There are still other areas where Member States may need to seek clarification before authorizing the Secretary-General to effect changes or initiate processes. We feel that any decision or resolution by the General Assembly on the reform proposals will need to bring out these categories clearly and spell out the position of Member States in some detail.

As time is limited, we shall not comment on each of the numerous proposals made by the Secretary-General. Instead, we shall give some comments on just a few. We agree wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without a restructuring of the Security Council to make it more representative and to invest its actions with legitimacy and authority. We continue to attach a high degree of importance to the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, including expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, with adequate representation of the developing countries among the new permanent and non-permanent members.

We agree with the Secretary-General in according the highest priority to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This is a testimony to the priority attached by the Secretary-General to socio-economic development and his commitment to making socio-economic development the centrepiece of United Nations activities.

The Secretary-General has spoken for all of us by calling for fewer meetings and fewer reports. However, the critical task is to determine what to include and what to exclude. Given the size and diversity of this world body, this is an area that requires careful

consideration and agreement at a political level. We feel it would be optimal for the Secretary-General to come up with a set of proposals on reducing both the number of meetings and the volume of documentation along the lines suggested in the section on serving Member States, for consideration by the Member States.

We agree with the Secretary-General on the need to continuously update the programme of work, and to identify and dispense with mandates and activities that are no longer relevant. The sunset provisions should cover both new mandates and existing activities. If that is not done we shall have the anomalous situation of subjecting every new initiative and mandate to specific time-limits, while those items that have stretched out over the years will continue to figure on the agendas of various bodies long after becoming completely obsolete. Without doubt, the General Assembly will have to assume the responsibility for reviewing and renewing mandates through explicit action.

We welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General in the field of human rights to initiate processes to rationalize, streamline and reduce the burden of reporting requirements, particularly for developing countries. We trust that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will consult Member States at the appropriate stage before finalizing his recommendations formulated in consultation with treaty bodies. Similarly, we also expect consultations with Member States on the review of special procedures.

We are somewhat concerned by the proposals contained in paragraphs 50 and 51 of the report, by which the resident coordinator system at the country level, which oversees operational activities for development and development cooperation, would be mandated to incorporate human rights activities at the country level. Our concern stems from the possibility that the very limited resources currently available for technical cooperation in development areas, and particularly in crucial areas of human resources development, would now be diverted to human rights, good governance and other softer areas of development. Although many of the international conferences have pledged additional resources for development, capacity-building and technical cooperation, these have hardly been forthcoming. In such circumstances, entrusting the resident coordinator system with promoting human rights at the country level would only be at the expense of technical cooperation. That would hardly be to most developing countries.

There are also two other attendant in First, there would be a tendency to shift resources away from traditional areas on th country-driven programming, that is, on the the United Nations system is merely res changes in the "demands" of recipient Secondly, grant assistance would be u advocacy and advice from outside, whic welcome development and which could, at the borderline between advice and decisi That would be an undesirable feature that to undermine the time-tested characterist United Nations system, namely, responsiveness, universality and impartiality

We have taken note of the proposals r area of enhancing public information, and i of those for expanding educational out imparting greater dynamism to the activi Department of Public Information. In pri welcome the Secretary-General's proposal regional information hubs instead of the cur of United Nations information centres i Europe, where such centres drain away a l of the resources of the Department. Ho would like to study the implications of ext to developing-country regions, where th have been performing valuable services. other proposals of the Secretary-General to the Department and improve oversight of p Given its activism, image and leadership, we doubt that these initiatives will stren Department's overall effectiveness.

The proposals of the Secretary-G strengthen the effectiveness of the field-lev in developing countries include joint progra pooling of resources. Such attempts have be the past too, but not with considerable s hope that the current efforts will be more suc

The Secretary-General plans to document within the next year clarifying responsibilities in the area of technical coop also plans to establish a panel of eminent review the relationship between the United N civil society. In the case of the former, we th document will not only clarify

responsibilities but also suggest ways and means of enhancing the technical capacity of the Secretariat units responsible for technical cooperation and identify the needs in this area as well as means of achieving them. Similarly, in the case of the panel on the United Nations relationship with civil society, we hope that the terms of reference of the panel will be so drawn as to preserve the intergovernmental character of the Organization and to clarify the responsibility that ultimately devolves on Governments for the decisions made at the United Nations and for their implementation.

An area that requires much deeper consideration and further thought is that of the new planning and budget system that the Secretary-General has proposed. The measures outlined by the Secretary-General for a medium-term plan that is co-terminus with the budget period might well be a workable proposition, but it clearly needs more careful and detailed analysis.

The Secretary-General appears to advocate the abolition of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, without giving us any alternatives by which the mandate of the Committee could be redesigned so as to respond to contemporary needs and realities. The Secretary-General has asked for flexibility to reallocate resources between programmes and between allocations for personnel and other allocations by up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period. Even within national systems of Government, it is doubtful whether such wide latitude and flexibility would be permitted by the ministries of finance to line ministries to reallocate resources between budget lines by up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period. This is an area whose implications require careful consideration. We are also concerned that high levels of reallocation without reference to, and the approval of, intergovernmental bodies would have the potential to distort intergovernmental mandates. Once again, developing countries might end up as the losers.

We have taken note of the proposals made by the Secretary-General to enhance staff motivation and mobility across the United Nations system. We feel strongly that the experience accumulated over the years by the Secretariat divisions in charge of human resources management, the International Civil Service Commission, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and similar bodies should be fully utilized when undertaking the tasks outlined in actions 25 to 35 of the Secretary-General's proposals.

Those are some of my delegation's preliminary views on the reform proposals made by the Secretary-General. We look forward to working with other delegations in the discussions and consultations that will take place. In a larger sense, we agree with the perception, so forcefully brought out by the Deputy Secretary-General in a recent article, that the United Nations as an Organization needs to provide management and cooperation at the global level to address the broader issues confronting the world — issues that transcend borders. Addressing that challenge calls for three broad initiatives involving the need for legitimacy, the development of instruments and institutions that can make connections among a vast array of complex and interrelated issues, and passing the test of effectiveness. What is required is the right balance between universal institutions and effective ones. India agrees that if the United Nations system has to be a crucial part of solving the world's problems, it must be provided with adequate authority and resources. The Assembly should be in a position to give clear guidance to the Secretary-General so that the process of reform can be taken forward. I wish to pledge the full support of the Indian delegation in ensuring the success of such an exercise.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Making the Organization a more effective instrument to achieve our priorities is a common goal of the Member States of the United Nations. In that regard, the Secretary-General's proposal is very welcome in our collective effort to proceed with a reform process that will enable the United Nations to work more effectively. Allow me to congratulate him on holding open-ended informal consultations on 24 October, where it was possible to begin an exchange of ideas between Member States and the Secretariat.

In broad terms, the proposals of the Secretary-General can be divided in three categories. The first would include initiatives that can be developed by the Secretariat without the explicit authorization of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General could proceed with the implementation of those measures, without running the risk of Member States indicating

how the plans need to be modified in the event that changes materialize that do not result in the anticipated better functioning of the Organization.

The second category of proposals is characterized by the request for the elaboration of studies that propose ways of strengthening the performance capacity of the United Nations. The majority of proposals related to strengthening the Organization in the area of human rights fall into that category. The same is the case with proposals related to actions 2 through 5, which requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to hold consultations on drafting reports and plans with treaty organs and directly with Member States of the Organization. That would not allow for deeper analysis of the proposals related to that item. It would be logical that those proposals be reconsidered by the Member States of the Organization when the studies are ready.

The third category of proposals is related to what was called a recommendation in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the Organization. In order to proceed with measures related to those proposals, explicit mandates of the General Assembly will be necessary to authorize the Secretary-General to proceed. Generally, additional time and clarity will be needed so that the majority of Member States can properly consider and assess the effects of such measures. To that end, it will be necessary to maintain an ongoing dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat.

The majority of the measures related to reform in the Organization's budget also fall into that category. Even though we agree with the Secretary-General with regard to the need to simplify the budgetary process and the drafting of the medium-term plan, as well as with regard to the need for a stricter system of evaluation and control of United Nations expenditures, we are not convinced that the proposed measures, such as reducing the medium-term plan by half or eliminating the Committee for Programme and Coordination, represent the most convenient route for the ongoing search to achieve those objectives. Those matters must be examined more closely.

A final point, which I must address, is the reform of the Security Council. The Secretary-General has devoted barely three paragraphs of his report to that item, which are found at the beginning of his report. However, he approaches the question categorically, stating in paragraph 20 of his report (A/57/387): "No reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council". I will not go on at great length about my country's position on the reform of the Council, which is broadly known. Nonetheless, it seems to me necessary to emphasize the coincidence of impressions, both on the part of Member States and on the part of the Secretariat, that exist regarding the importance of the item. In that regard, convinced that the Assembly will devote to the process the attention it requires, I reiterate that progress in the discussions on the reform of the Council will depend substantially on the orientation that the presidency of the General Assembly will be able to provide it.

In the consultations held on 24 October, the Deputy Secretary-General underscored the strategic character and the condition of the agenda for changes as main principles of the document entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". While recognizing the need to give greater detail regarding some of the ongoing measures of the report, she indicated that what is expected in that first stage of appraisal is to be able to rely on the reactions and guidance of Member States. Accordingly, I will proceed cautiously in presenting specific proposals regarding the measures considered in the document, limiting myself to assuring the Secretary-General that he can count on the active participation and support of the Brazilian delegation in the debate and the decisions related to proposed reforms.

As you, Sir, have already stated, the continued dialogue on reform proposals must continue to be held in unofficial consultations, among all Member States. In order to guarantee that those consultations have the productive character that we hope will be reflected in the final outcome of that process, allow me to conclude by reinforcing the suggestion that future consultations on the report be organized on the basis of thematic separation of the measures contained in the document.

Mrs. Loemban Tobing-Klein (Suriname): The international community needs a strong multilateral institution to address contemporary global issues in this era of globalization. This body, the United Nations, still proves to be the best forum for dealing with the challenges facing us in today's world. To efficiently operate in this dynamic process of current international relations, reforms to strengthen the Organization are essential.

We, therefore, welcome this initiative of the Secretary-General to look once again into the issue of United Nations reform through an agenda for further change. We congratulate the Secretary-General on his excellent report, which deals with strengthening the United Nations, doing what matters, serving Member States better, working better together, allocating resources to priorities, investing in excellence and managing change.

The reforms outlined in the Secretary-General's report would lead to a more effective United Nations that would be better able to assist us in reaching the pivotal Millennium Development Goals. At the national level, my Government is working towards achieving those goals by, first and foremost, incorporating that set of priorities into national policies.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General acknowledged the importance of reform of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We absolutely agree that "The promotion and protection of human rights is a bedrock requirement for the realization of the Charter's vision of a just and peaceful world" (*A/57/387, para. 45*). We therefore applaud the work being done by the United Nations in this field, as well as the Secretary-General's proposals for intensifying United Nations efforts in the area of human rights.

In this regard we have to stress that every human being has the right to development. This right is enshrined in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986. Development and respect for human rights are interdependent.

We agree fully that the very valuable report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", pays special attention to human rights and its interrelationship to development. My delegation is extremely satisfied with this rights-based approach and wishes to thank the Secretary-General for pursuing it. In this respect we also wish to stress the importance of human rights education as a key to development.

The right to development has been reaffirmed as a universal and inalienable right and as an integral part of fundamental human rights during the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993.

All the proposed changes, improvements and efforts at streamlining contained in the Secretary-General's report are focusing on the people of the world; they are aimed at making the life of the people better and more rewarding, at meeting development goals and at making the United Nations a more effective instrument in the service of the world's people, as the Secretary-General stated at the opening of the debate on his report yesterday morning.

Improvements in the Department of Public Information; a focus on the quality, rather than the quantity of United Nations reports and conferences; strengthening partnerships with civil society and the private sector; allocating resources to priorities, and investing in the workforce of the United Nations are all areas where we anticipate change. We are especially pleased by the fact that the Secretary-General has acknowledged the difficulties facing smaller nations like my own, in playing a meaningful role in United Nations activities, because of difficulties in keeping track of and participating in the vast amount of annual meetings.

Suriname was privileged to chair the meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group during the month of September, when the Secretary-General, briefing the Group on his current report, said the meeting was the first in a series he intended to have with regional groups. He requested guidance from Member countries, as well as technical advice from various committees.

My delegation noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General stressed during this important briefing several priority subjects, including, the promotion and protection of human rights and more assistance from Member States in this area; the need for the United Nations to respond to the requirements of the international community and to move forward at a faster pace and at a higher level; the need to better allocate resources to priority areas; improved United Nations interaction with civil society; the Organization's responsibility regarding African-related affairs; the streamlining of vital functions of the United Nations; better coordination in the social and economic area, especially in developing countries; improved service to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as to Member States in general; realignment of the United Nations priorities to coincide with the aims of the Millennium Declaration, as well as recently held summits and conferences;

implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; and increased focus on information and communication technology.

If we, as Member States, privileged as we are to belong to this important family of nations with so many great developmental potentials, can succeed in joining hands to realize the essential goals of this important report of the Secretary-General, we can live up to the noble values, principles and goals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, namely respect for human rights, human dignity, equality, tolerance, peace, national and international security and social and economic progress.

The Government of Suriname is grateful for the continuous, serious and strong efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the lives of the people on this planet; we fully support the Secretary-General in his endeavours to strengthen our Organization; we look forward to a continuously improving United Nations and we are ready to contribute where and when possible.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.